

General Ferriter, General White, Colonel Puckett, Vietnam Veterans, ladies and gentlemen – good morning! It is a pleasure to be here today at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center! And it truly is a privilege for me to be amongst such an outstanding assembly of American heroes and patriots for our Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Ceremony.

As we gather here today to celebrate the Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Ceremony, I would like to recognize and thank all our Vietnam War veterans, all the courageous men and women – our family, our friends, and our neighbors –for all the sacrifices you have made to defend and protect this great nation. Your contributions are unparalleled, and your courage and bravery have made this world a better place to live.

The determination and courage of every soldier and sailor, airman, Marine and Coast Guardsman, have given our country and its people an opportunity for a better life. Without our brave veterans, there would be no “land of the free.”

The history of our nation is testimony to the fact that we as Americans cherish and enjoy freedom. Today, I’d like to thank those who have protected and continue to protect our way of life.

Young and old, rich and poor, black and white - they are men and women who served America with an undying passion. While away at war in Vietnam, they endured great hardships, separation from family and friends, and experienced the horrors of war. They sacrificed their today, so this nation could have a better tomorrow. Yet when they returned home, they often did not receive the deserved praise from a grateful nation for their sacrifices. There were no ticker tape parades. When they boarded planes and trains – no announcements were made over the intercom urging passengers to acknowledge and thank the service-members on board. No spontaneous applause.

Our Vietnam veterans have helped defeat communism, liberated nations and spread the word of democracy worldwide. They have carried the great burden of not just protecting our country, but also thousands of innocent civilians worldwide. This world owes a great debt of gratitude to our veterans that can never be repaid.

We are privileged that the week our nation celebrated Memorial Day we have the Vietnam Memorial Wall here at the Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

It is often said that veterans are ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things-- I would like to take this opportunity to thank the extraordinary families who support our veterans. It is with your help and support that our veterans have given us this extraordinary country.

Once again, thank you all for your service to our great nation and its people! Welcome Home! Welcome Home! Welcome Home! God bless you all for being here, God bless our veterans, and God bless America!